

or so has been that the whole principle of consent, as enshrined in the Government of Ireland Act, should be buried?

The main theoretical shift within the S.D.L.P. in the last 5 or 6 years, in close co-operation with the Haughey wing of Fianna Fail, has been in refining the proposition of what they grandiosely term "changing the context", i.e., expelling Northern Ireland from the U.K. against the will of its people in the wildly optimistic hope that they will all then decide to troop meekly into an All-Ireland state.

If the Labour Party document stresses that a united Ireland "must be based on consent", then it hardly seems likely that declaring Irish unity to be a Good Thing will be enough to "change the context", as the S.D.L.P. demand, especially since Alex Kitson, study group chairman, stated that the other main points agreed by the group was opposition to any immediate troop withdrawals and to political status. In fact, since the Labour Party in the interim will "opt for a continuation of some form of greatly democratised direct rule" which could include "powersharing at various levels", and add to that Jim Callaghan's proposal for an independent Northern Ireland, you have just about the whole gamut of political options open to the people of Northern Ireland.

If the Labour Party will not attempt to enforce Irish unity, what, concretely, is it doing with this new policy? It is simply saddling itself with a pious hope which will encourage their

own wild men to make even more inflated claims based more on indulging their own romantic ideas than on promoting the welfare of the people of Northern Ireland. A rather sickening thing is that the report of the Labour Party "would hope to forge more working class unity". This is obviously a cynical piece of phrasemongering designed to give some kind of socialist justification to a policy which must be clear, can only deepen sectarian divisions. To ally with one of the sectarian camps, the Labour Party says goodbye to making any contribution to the welfare of Northern Ireland.

CALLOUS

The National H-Block Committee issued a statement condemning the "callousness" of the media for speculation about a possible bye-election in the Cavan/Westmeath constituency since one of its recently elected IRA TDs was shot to death. Could this be the same National H-Block Committee which recently announced that there was to be an increase in the number of hunger-strikers so as to eliminate gaps between deaths, and any diminution of anti-British justice pressure as a result?

KEMMY'S ELECTION

A candidate who stands for a socialist society in the Republic, and rejects the nationalist demand to rule Northern Ireland has been elected to the Dail. Jim Kemmy, who has always expressed Socialist views without compromise, now represents Limerick in Leinster House.

The IRA claim to have made great gains having two T.D.'s elected. In the 1957 General Election, they had 4 T.D.'s (and in the 1961 General Election, all four of them lost their seats). But Limerick now has a socialist T.D. **That** didn't happen in 1957.

The socialist wing of the republican movement, which has made convulsive efforts, not yet successfully, to break away from nationalism and get down to class politics, has also scored. Joe Sherlock of S.F.W.P. made a very bad start when he asserted on RTE radio that his party is against "abandoning our claim to any part of the full national territory". If that is true then the behaviour of his party since 1972 when it decided that the campaign against partition was leading towards a sectarian civil war, and that a sectarian civil war was not a fit objective for socialists — makes no sense whatsoever.

We hope that Sherlock and his party will improve as time goes on. We hope they will decide that they aren't **really** tying themselves in knots for the fun of it, but rather they want to break up the conservative nationalist consensus in the Republic. In the meantime, we view S.F.W.P. as a confused organisation struggling in this general direction and we welcome Sherlock's victory.

The major constituent forces of the nationalist consensus have got themselves nicely in a jam. It is difficult not to sympathise with the poor Labour Party. Whatever it did — entered Coalition, supported a minority Fine Gael government, or went into "principled socialist opposition", thus allowing Fianna Fail to form a minority government — it will probably lose. The Labour Party is between the devil, the deep blue sea and the wide blue sky.

The Party has failed to establish for itself a distinctive political identity, even with the increase in what should be its natural constituency — the urban industrial areas. In the 1918 and 1921 General Elections, the Labour Party stood aside so as not to "divert" the electorate from the important business of nationalism. Labour has ever since had difficulty in convincing the electorate that its politics are other than insubstantial and extraneous to the nation's political life. Too often, the Labour Party has been afraid to challenge the established views —

from uncritical support for the Common Agricultural Policy — drifting in the wake of Fianna Fail's republican push. Because the Labour Party accepted Sinn Fein as the essential voice of workers in 1918, it has difficulty coping today with Sinn Fein's two parts — the Treaty party and the anti-Treaty party.

Only one prediction can be made with certainty. An attempt will be made to form a minority H-Block Government, that is, to use the H-Block TDs in order to try and whip up anti-British and anti-Protestant hysteria among the population of the Republic, and force whatever government is in office to give the hysteria public expression.

The election to Dail Eireann of an active member of Socialists Against Nationalism, and the response to our pamphlet **H-Block and Sectarian Civil War**, indicates that there is widespread opposition to this bogoted campaign. A democrats must be prepared to resist its escalation.

SCRAP ARTICLES—2 & 3

We believe: That the clear wish of the majority of people in Northern Ireland to remain citizens of the United Kingdom must be respected.

We declare: That socialists must accept the present state boundaries in Ireland as a basis for developing socialist politics. The call for a 32-county socialist Republic is nothing more than the old nationalism newly dressed in a socialist guise.

We oppose: The demand for the British Government to declare its intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland.

We demand: That the Government of the Republic should recognise as legitimate the present constitutional status of Northern Ireland. To this end we demand that Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic's Constitution, which lays claim to Northern Ireland's territory, be dropped. This is clearly required by the Helsinki Agreement, which was signed by the Republic in 1975.

Membership: Membership is open to all those who support our aims.

Contact: 33 Greenhill Road, Garryowen, Limerick.

DIFFERENT STANDARDS

Tim Pat Coogan, editor of Major de Valera's **Irish Press**, is utterly appalled by violence of all kinds. Or is he? Compare his response to the following two events. On May 20th, commenting on the killing of 50 British soldiers near Camlough, and having ritualistically wrung his editorial hands over these mindless killings, he continued:

The most useful response from Britain to yesterday's killings would be a fresh consideration of the role of its army in the North and indeed, of the whole British presence there ..."

And on May 1st, he was at it again.

"How many young soldiers (must be) blown up before Mrs. Thatcher recognises the need for compromise ..."

Or, to translate, "how many of the bastards must be killed (totally mindlessly, of course) before we get what we want?"

But listen to the outraged tone of the May 29 editorial:

If the H-Block supporters think that acts of hooliganism ... during the essential democratic process of an election campaign are going to further their cause, they have another thing coming .

Such "bully boy tactics", he continued, will only have the quite proper effect of "greatly diminishing sympathy for their cause .

Has Coogan had a change of heart? Such strong language. Such righteous indignation! Such concern for the essential democratic process! In reassessing the murders of 5 soldiers and indeed the numerous other killings (including that of a milkman and his 14-year-old son) committed by H-Block campaigners during the local election campaign in the North, do we hear Daithi O'Connell and Ruairi O'Bradaigh gasp in dismay? They need not worry. The outraged outpouring is all about a certain **egg** which hit one C.J. Haughey during the course of the Southern election campaign!

Coogan speaks for an important section of the Southern ruling class and the message is loud and clear. Murdering Protestants in the North is one thing, throwing eggs at Our Great Leader, or otherwise stepping out of line in the South, be it ever so slightly, is quite another thing.

But then, Ruairi and Daithi have always understood that. That's why they described the planting of a bomb in a Fianna Fail election office as an 'act of criminal political folly'. That's why they expressed such heartfelt sorrow at the high spirits of skinheads against H-Block in Dublin. They know killing Protestant milkmen in Belfast is quite acceptable but breaking windows in O'Connell Street? Shocking!

The only people who **don't** seem to understand are the Provo's left-wing supporters who still imagine the revolution can be extended South. Sometimes, though, it seems they **do** understand but just don't care. Having surrendered themselves body and soul to nationalist hysteria, the fact that it contains not a jot of revolutionary potential no longer concerns them. They have found fulfilment in the embraces of the Countess Cathleen.

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Labour Lunacy

The British Labour Party's special committee to review policy on Northern Ireland has reportedly recommended the adoption of Irish unity as the party's long-term aim. According to the **Irish Times** report (July 1st) the report "stressed that it must be based on consent".

The Labour Party was the Party who introduced the Government of Ireland Act in 1949 in response to the declaration of a Republic in the South. This Act stated that Northern Ireland would remain part of the United Kingdom unless its parliament should vote otherwise. Is the Labour Party really unaware that the major argument of the nationalist cause in the last 5 years

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

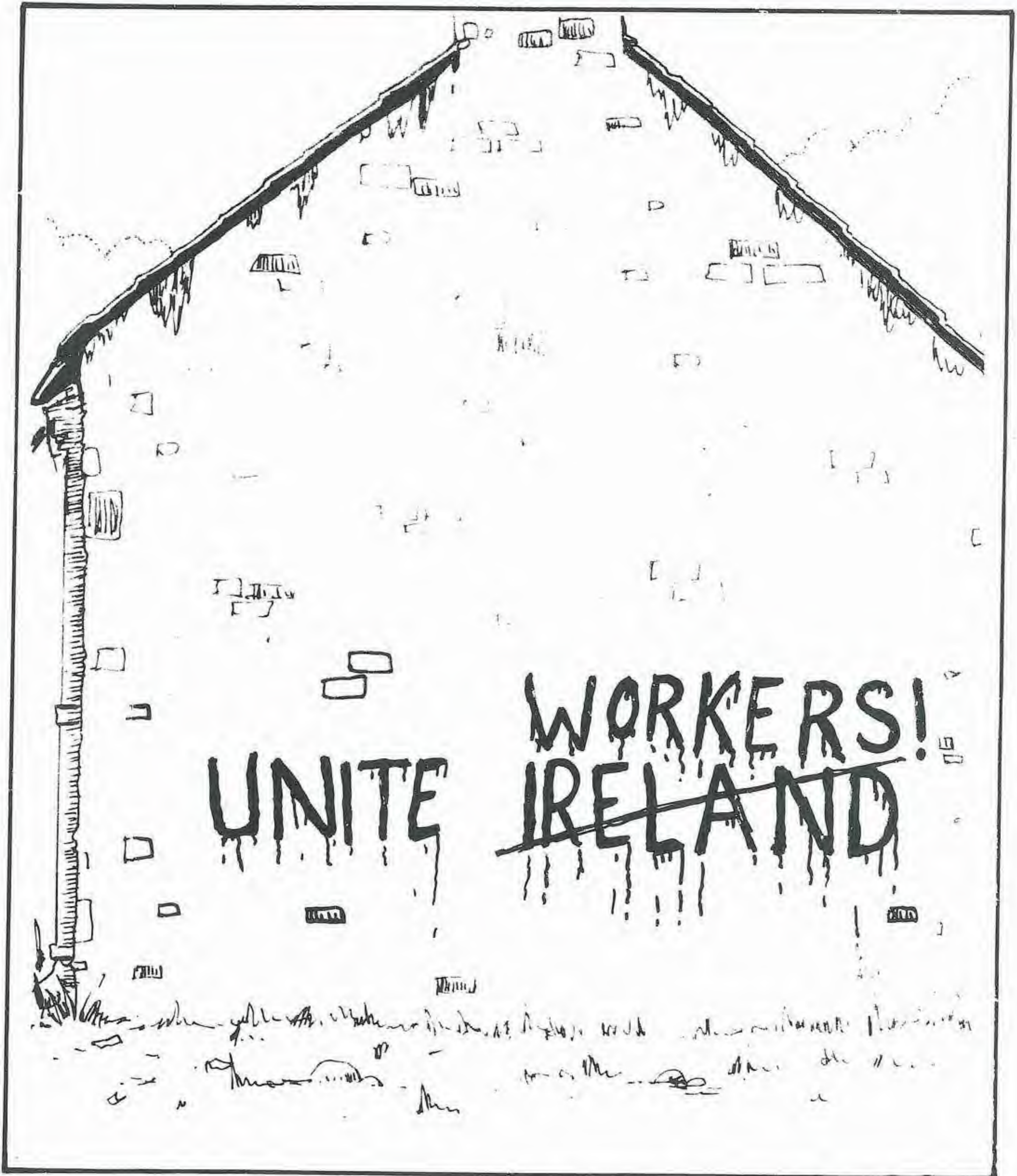
July, 1981

15p

Vol 13 No 7

**THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER**

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic ...' James Connolly



A VISIT TO BELFAST

by James O'Dwyer

REACTIONS, IMPRESSIONS
VIEWPOINTS —
9th—11th July, 1981.

I see many people dying of hunger because they don't have a decent choice to eat. I see people who are hungry because they haven't got food, but I've never dealt with people who are hungry because they choose to be hungry.

Mother Therese of Calcutta,
6th. July, 1981.

9.30 a.m. On the Limerick to Dublin train with John Liddy in company. We are on our way to Belfast this sunny morning, leaving one reality to enter another. So we shall traverse the island today leaving Limerick and its quiet streets for the battle-torn heart of the North.

I quote Seamus last night: "If you think of the potential of the country — economically and for the rising of the standard of living in comparison with fifty years ago ... and then you think of the potential for chaos".

There were crows hovering on the east front of St. Joseph's Hospital as we pulled out of the station and I wonder what this journey will bring.

2.05 p.m. Connolly Station. I have read John's notes; he mentions the woman we saw on the quays this morning, carrying a crucifix held up before her.

3.17 p.m. Depart Drogheda station in sunshine going over a high bridge looking down on houses and cargo boats loading timber on a green river.

4.25 p.m. Portadown; Craigavon West. The sun's gone down and there is a row of derelict houses opposite with their slates crumbling and desolate.

4.40 p.m. Lurgan: Unlock H Hole — slogan.
Woodlands.

6.50 p.m. Lisburn: We have been listening and watching the news on television. The Irish Prime Minister, Dr. FitzGerald, is having discussions with members of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace in an attempt to reactivate the dialogue on the H-Blocks hunger strikes.

It is getting darker now as evening falls over Belfast.

8.00 p.m. Passing road blocks and army jeeps with soldiers on our way into Belfast to see Joe McDonnell's house.

8.15 p.m. 112 Lenadoon Avenue: There is a queue outside the house of people waiting to go in and see the coffin. There is also a Book of Condolence which people are signing outside the gate. There are black flags fluttering as they hang from the windows of all the houses. A notice painted on the gable wall says "the people of Lenadoon support Joe McDonnell and his brave comrades on hunger strike". Black and white pictures of the hunger strikers are hung in many windows. Three flags fly at half mast. One black, one a tricolour, the third a blue flag with a yellow rising sun.

From here you can see the distant hills, hazy in the light of evening. A notice in the window of a house behind me reads — "Joe McDonnell, murdered by Margaret Thatcher, 6th. July, 1981".

There are dogs scampering about the grass, one curled up on the grass.

9.22 p.m. John says, "The queue is getting bigger and bigger".

9.28 p.m. Trocedaro Bar, Markets. We have come here from the Suffolk Inn where we sat in the public bar for half an hour.

I talk with an old man who knew Joe McDonnell. He said that he was a man with many friends; that no matter what part of the City he went into he was always known and liked; an unusual occurrence in Belfast.

We found out from the H-Block Information Centre, a

caravan parked on Lenadoon Avenue, that the funeral will take place tomorrow after 1 o'clock Mass at the Church of St. Oliver Plunkett.

11.15 p.m. Woodlands: We sat in the Europa having walked through the almost empty streets, passing soldiers lurking on corners, weapons poised; mere boys. The crowd in the upstairs bar of the Europa was like any you would find in Dublin on a Friday evening, except for the accents. We heard that a boy was killed in the Ardoyne tonight. 12.07 a.m. news on the radio confirms that a fifteen year old youth was shot this evening during rioting. The news continues with the story of Garret FitzGerald's talks about the hunger strike; the woman who died as a result of being shot with a plastic bullet. The flying of the tricolour from the Andersonstown Leisure Centre is condemned by Ian Paisley. The rugby player, John Robbie, is to emigrate to South Africa. The weather for tomorrow is expected to be warm but cloudy.

John and I were talking earlier of how we felt; how it is hard to realise that the two Irelands are part of one island. How we have one sort of 'gut reaction' to the situation and quite another intellectually, especially tonight outside the home of Joe McDonnell.

The news said there was 'sporadic violence' in Belfast tonight. Is that how you describe the death of a fifteen year old, who tomorrow becomes another statistic? I think that this boy is somebody's son, somebody's brother. Lives change from this moment for these people and the hate hardens fast.

It needs to be understood that each life that is lost in this violence is not just one statistic but that a series of lives are affected. Statistics of death become statistics of human misery.

Concerning ourselves — there is a nagging sense of complacency. John and I have come from peaceful Limerick to this small hell on earth **but** we can go back to our peaceful city. The people who live here must live with the violence and death. They must harden themselves to it as a daily occurrence.

There are strange contradictions — Tonight inside the armoured and wiremeshed Trocedaro Bar in the markets of Belfast, young men were playing pool and watching television much as young men in any city do. The difference is that the spectre of death haunts the streets outside. Life continues no matter what the external situation, as I knew from my experience of Israel at war. People have to relax and enjoy themselves no matter what they may be suffering. I suppose the need to play is a basic instinct.

12.35 a.m. What price can you put on a life? This is a moral question and quagmire.

We were stopped this evening by the British Army on our way from the Europa to here. They examined our driver's identity but let us pass. There was a moment of anxiety. You could hear it in the driver's voice. The smell of fear is a stench.

9.33 a.m. The boy who was shot during rioting last night was named as David Hanna. He was shot on Flax Street.

10.20. Last night seeing the Union Jacks flying from the houses in the Suffolk Estate and the red, white and blue bunting across the street in celebration of the twelfth. From the windows of the train yesterday afternoon I could see bonfires being built of wood and old tyres.

12.15 p.m. 'Their Hunger, Their Path, Our Struggle' a slogan on the Falls Road.

At the Andersonstown Leisure Centre there were two flags flying, one black, one a tricolour.

12.20 p.m. Lenadoon: 'The Right Hon. Bobby Sands, Esq., M.P. murdered by his fellow members of H.M. Government' — painted on a wall.

12.30 p.m. I see a young girl in the crowd carrying a wreath made with yellow and white flowers in the shape of a H. She is perhaps seventeen and quite beautiful.

The black flags flutter in the breeze.

We talked with our Protestant driver on the way here. He is hoping to get permission to go to Australia within the next few weeks. He says he has had enough, that he can make a good living there. He is the last of his family living in Northern Ireland. The rest of his family have emigrated to Australia.

Two helicopters circle overhead,
'Go Home Soldiers, Your presence here destroys the Air.
Your smile disfigures us,
Go Home,
Before we send you Home dead'.
Painted on a wall.

There are a group of youths perched on the high roof of one of the houses. They carry black flags.

12.40 p.m. They are carrying the Tricolour draped coffin behind the hearse, up the hill from Joe O'Donnell's house to the church.

Many here carry small brown paper packets of sandwiches. I can hear the pipes lonely tune waft on the air.
We, the Press, are here like carrion crows.
'When you came to this Land
You said you came to Understand,
Soldier, we're tired of your understanding.
Tired of British Troops on our soil.
Tired of the knock upon the door,
Tired of the rifle butt on the head,
Tired of the jails and the beatings,
Tired of the death of old friends,
Tired of the tears and the funerals,
Those Endless, Endless funerals .

Is this your understanding?'

The above was painted on a wall on the route of the funeral. One instinctively felt that the counterpart of this message adorned the Protestant walls of the Shankill.

12.50 p.m. The funeral cortege has passed. A tricolour draped coffin with a Guard of Honour of seven masked Provisionals, led by two pipers; a man and a woman, followed by the family. I saw Joe McDonnell's son and daughter with their mother. The boy was swaying from side to side crying unconsolably, held up on both sides.

The scene before me is a sea of people with black flags held up in the crowd. The helicopters keep up their constant circling, getting louder and louder as they close in over our heads.

1.37 p.m. I think on those lines painted on the wall:

'Tired of the tears and the funerals,
Those Endless, Endless Funerals'.

How much death can a people take. I have seen two of the hunger strikers buried. I do not want to see anymore. These people have known thousands of funerals. Does one become armoured against pain. I doubt it.

The humanity of our driver talking about the hunger strikers. He, too, does not want to see anyone die. There was a certain hopelessness in what he said about the situation here. All he wants to do now is get out.

I asked John Liddy: 'What's going on in your head?' He put his hands to his face and said: 'Is it real? A lot more real than what's going on in the Europa. At least there at the funeral, it was real. They were suffering'.

1.55 p.m. We spoke of McDonnell's son at the funeral. How can this child forgive or forget such pain. The consequences of these days' events pass on to a new generation. That child will be emotionally starved for the rest of his life.

2.35 p.m. Waiting inside the gates of Miltown Cemetery for the funeral. We are sitting on the curb of a grave. There are not as many people here as were for Bobby Sands funeral. The helicopters are still hovering at intervals.

2.48 p.m. Small children play among the headstones. Three grave diggers pass us by.

3.08 p.m. The children wear badges of the hunger strikers here, in the same way as children in Dublin wear badges of pop stars.

3.22 p.m. We walked here to the Andersonstown Leisure

Centre to meet the funeral. There are three helicopters making their noise now.

4.00 p.m. At 3.45 p.m. we heard and saw the volley being fired over the coffin. Three shots, two, one after another, then a gap, and the third shot, silence and then loud applause from a big crowd.

7.25 p.m. In a house in the Drumlin part of County Down. Dinner is in the process of being prepared. Our friends spoke of their lives here; how they are little affected by the present troubles, because they live in the country. They spoke of the time Bobby Sands died and the tension increased ten fold.

How the bread disappeared from the shelves of the supermarket the moment it was placed there as people prepared for trouble.

This is again another reality. Our friend teaches in a school in Belfast. He has taught in two schools, one Protestant, one Catholic. He sees the differences between the two communities as being ethnic.

We heard on the six o'clock News how there had been trouble moments after we left the funeral; how, and it is not yet clear, one or more of the Provos Guard of Honour were arrested near by. Apparently after the volley was fired, the Provos went into a nearby house to change out of uniform. They were arrested and one may have been shot. There was rioting.

8.00 p.m. The editorial of the **Andersonstown News**, which we bought outside Miltown Cemetery, is headed: 'The Principles V The Unprincipled' and begins, 'Alas another man of principle is dead. He died by his own hand say the devious English. That he died for a cause and a principle in his dealing with an unscrupulous people is seen of little consequence by those same people ...

'The same English, via Carrington, came home from Moscow with their tails between their legs, lamenting the lack of Russian understanding of English concern of the occupation of Afghanistan by the Russians ... Here they are in exactly the same position, only the occupation has been for hundreds of years, but do they view themselves to be aggressors? Not on your life. God help and save us from their foolish wit'.

The editorial concludes: 'All we Irish want is our own, nothing more, nothing less, exactly the same as any other Nation, and while the English insist on denying us the ownership of our own land then so be it. Violence will prevail'.

The attitude of the million Northern Irish Protestants is not mentioned.

10.05 p.m. Petrol bombs at Rockhill Street.

10.50: Fire on the road at Lenadoon.

11.20 p.m. Belfast is eerily quiet this evening. It is now raining. We saw some small activity with petrol bombs being thrown at a Saracen on Rockhill Street, and a fire in the middle of the road at Lenadoon. As our car passed I could feel the heat and smell the burning rubber.

12.25 a.m. The driver tonight told us that three of the four Provos who fired the volley were captured. The fourth was helped in his escape by the rioters. And I think of the consequences of the death of Joe McDonnell. Three dead and the multiplication of misery increases.

9.35 p.m. On the Belfast to Dublin train. And I consider the past 36 hours. How we have seen so much and so little of Northern Ireland. As Dervla Murphy says: 'A place apart'.

What can I say that I have learned? I am a little closer in understanding the circumstances of violence, if not the facts.

I know that for a solution to come about it will be necessary for both North and South to look closer at one another's attitudes; to examine and analyse them, and hopefully we might come to understand one another. Not only will we in the South have to look at Unionist attitudes, difficult and all as that might be, but also at the attitudes of the Catholic people of Northern Ireland who claim to be part of the whole Ireland. The South will have to readjust its thinking about these people too; for the Ireland they want is not necessarily the Ireland we can bring about.

If we are to find a solution — and let it be remembered that a solution to the H-Block crisis is not a solution to the Northern Problem — we all, both North and South, will have to look closer at one another.

THE CORPORATION

FROM SHAWN-A-SCOOB

FROM A SKETCH OF THE MAMMON OF INIQUITY
PART 3

by Michael Hogan

Go try them in your need, as friends,
You'll find the rogues deceitful;
Give them the world and both its ends,
You'll find them still ungrateful;
Pour out your wine and break your bread—
But vote at next election
Against their "Man" — Your house and head
Will pay for the refection.

Is this the noble Christian Creed
Our Saviour promulgated?
Is this the fruit of the glorious seed
His love has generated?
His gospel turned the Mammon's trade,
His laws by pelf arrested;
Poor Ireland plundered and betrayed,
Can mournfully attest it.

Ye "Nationalists" beware! beware!
Two sections in your country
These men who dark green liveries wear,
And those our black gowned gentry;
These in the law's corrupted lurch
Will make ye tame and civil,
And those with powder of the Church
Would blow ye to the devil.

How are the Ten Commandments kept
In all their grand perfection?
It seems they can be overleaped
In case of an election,
When bloodshed—perjury—every vice
Outraging the Creator—
Are virtues meant to aggrandize
Some legislative traitor.

In Limerick I saw street and lane
With iniquity flooded;
God's name blasphemed by tongues profane,
And religion bemuddled;
While servants of the Blessed Lord
The Devil's work were doing,
In blowing trumpets of discord,
To keep the hell-broil brewing.

Thus for two miserable knaves
Was Heaven's High Priest insulted;
While o'er the souls of drunken slaves
The Prince of Crime exulted;
The Ten Commandments flew to fuzz,
Wherever again they got 'em—
Poor Religion on the surface was,
But Cash was at the bottom.

O wretched people sold like swine
To every Saxon buyer,
But Judases, in robes divine,
Like ranting Shawn the Liar;
With Religion's *pookeen* on your eyes,
And threatened with disasters;
You're driven, like beasts, to fetch a prize
To your dear Reverend Masters.

See how they grasp the gilded hand
Of every cut-throat *Giaour*
Who on the ruins of the land
Has risen to place and power:
They hold congenial intercourse
With Ireland's tyrants bloody;
While on their lips the deadliest curse
For Ireland's friends is ready.

But if the country tamely bears
This hideous imposition,
Why, let her till she basely shares
A general Inquisition:
Till Manhood crawls in rags and dust
Throughout the prostrate Nation;
And Slavery sickens with disgust
At its own degradation.

With honest wrath my Muse grows sick,
And weary of her strictures;
Then here I draw the curtain quick
O'er these unholy pictures:
But when from earth my soul is driven
To some great high or low sphere;
If knaves or traitors go to heaven,
By Jove, I'll never go there.

THE POORHOUSE

The Poorhouse's a monster that's never done cramming,
 And still crying out for more plunder and famine;
 A Glutton protected by statesmen illustrious,
 To gulph the life-sweet of the struggling industrious;
 A genial retreat for lewd scoundrels and bitches,
 And young ones picked up from the dykes and the ditches.
 What a wholesome employ for paid favourites and flatterers,
 To keep watch and ward o'er street blackguards and batterers!
 An emporium of vagabonds pampered and idle,
 Whose thoughts, deeds and words have no conscience nor bridle,
 We thought, by the meaning and sense of its term,
 It was made for the feeble, the old and infirm;
 Yet it sweeps in the produce of city and country,
 Not to feed a poor hundred but make a few gentry.
 Rate on rate in rotation each other is chasing,
 Not that the banned poor in the den are increasing.

HELL'S STATE

There must be a great many banks in hell,
 And more than ten per cent. allowed;
 For merchants, priests, parsons, and bishops as well,
 Are hurrying there in one mighty crowd.
 None for God, but all for "tin",
 Headlong to blazes goes the route;
 And I trust when they're all locked safely in,
 God's toiling poor will be all locked out.
 They're too impoverished to be damned,
 And the devil who doites on rank and state.
 In poverty's face his gate has slammed,
 For he cares for none but the rich and great.
 He's fond of coronets and thrones,
 Title and station, for he knows well
 That poor half-starved devils, with rags and bones,
 Would not be fashionable in hell.
 Sure, 'twould be a most *indecent* sight
 To damn a street-wench with a lady of pride;
 Or a slavish peasant with a lord of might,
 Or a pauper-loon by a guardian's side.
 I say, in the devil 'twould be bad taste
 To damn a Fenian with Bishop Moriarty;
 Or a ragged beggar-man with a priest,
 Or a lawless drunkard with Mr. McCarthy,
 Or with Cardinal Cullen an Irish felon,
 Or a Protestant patriot with Paul MacSwine;
 And sure in hell's state 'twould rise open rebellion
 To damn nationalist with Dean O'Brien
 'Twould be a mistake the most infernal,
 And the devil would be no statesman at all,
 If he damned the wheel of fortune with John Bernal,
 Or a poor night watchman with Ambrose Hall.
 Or the whole Corporation for their cupidity

In paying Corbett the engineer:
 For whose bombast, arrogance and stupidity,
 The city is taxed a hundred a year.

EPIGRAM ON GLADSTONE'S LAND BILL

The Bill has passed—it raised a shout
 That made the echoes peal behind it:
 'Twas like an egg a hen laid out,
 For which all looked and none could find it.
 Oh, Phantom Bill, without a head
 The rogue that fashioned you was clever:
 Like Samuel's ghost, you spoke and fled,
 And left the Land more damned than ever.

ON A POLITE HYPOCRITE

He has the aspect of a man,
 His manners are polite and good,
 But, oh, they're only mere japan
 That hides the spurious hollow wood.
 His friends are rotten as his sins;
 He lauds the priests and gilds the great;
 And yet, to serve his sordid ends,
 He'd sell friends, priests, and Church and State.

ON A LITERARY CONCOMB

A butterfly's brain, and the head of a plover,
 The stride of a goose, and full room to manoeuvre,
 What gender? The neutre— put petticoats on it,
 With crinoline, gown, and a gaudy plumed bennet,
 And there is your coxcomb, more trifling and tender
 Than if *it* belonged to the feminine gender.

Polls and partition

No one believes that opinion polls are 100% accurate, but certain aspects of opinion polls in Northern Ireland have remained constant over the years — and constantly ignored by Southern politicians. Surveys like the National Opinion Poll of 1976 and the Moxon-Browne survey of July 1978 showed a majority of Catholics (who are universally portrayed as clamouring for Irish unity) tending to accept solutions within the union with Britain and a substantial minority opposed to a united Ireland.

The election of Bobby Sands as M.P., however, enabled RTE's ultra-nationalist London correspondent, John O'Callaghan, to declare with relief that all this had now changed — changed utterly. Yet the results of a new opinion poll published by the **Sunday Times** of June 28 seem to belie the present apparent drift to extremism in Northern politics. Taken in mid-June, at the height of the H-Block hysteria, it shows continued union with Britain under a power-sharing government acceptable to 62% of Catholics. A united Ireland is acceptable — **acceptable** mind you, not necessarily first or only choice — to 58% of Catholics while one in 3 finds Irish unity positively **unacceptable**. Of the total population, the 25% who find Irish unity acceptable and the 70% who find it unacceptable have been fairly accurately and consistently reflected in electoral terms over the years.

Yet the H-Block campaigners can claim great success in that more than half of the Catholics favoured some concessions to prisoners while two-thirds had some degree of sympathy with the hunger strikers. Clearly, a degree of sympathy exists for the H-Block campaign which is not related to political support for Sinn Fein, even though the campaign is obviously an integral part of that organisation's political strategy. It must be assumed that the same double-think and selective emotional response to

deaths which is evident in the Republic, also prevails among Northern Catholics.

The **Times** reporters are very excited to find that a large majority still favour some kind of power-sharing. It is obvious that this particular option was phrased so as to elicit the greatest possible support: "**Northern Ireland to have its own Assembly with guarantees for the minority**". This statement would cover everything from Paisley's Committee system of minority representation to the guaranteed cabinet posts, favoured (at one time anyway) by the SDLP, and not surprisingly manages to be acceptable to 67% of respondents. But the vague attitudes to power-sharing expressed by 55% of the population (32% "tend to approve", 12% "neither approve nor disapprove", 11% "tend to disapprove") would be split into mutually exclusive blocks if the various parties were to put forward their mutually exclusive interpretations of power sharing as concrete proposals.

The **Times** admits it would be difficult to translate this vague support into definite agreed proposals, not least because the S.D.L.P., with Haughey's encouragement, now reject power-sharing, or indeed, any internal settlement within Northern Ireland (preferring as they do, a united Ireland or nothing to be achieved by some kind of coercion which they are careful not to specify).

Alas, says the **Times** quite truthfully, politicians ignore the wishes of the people. But politicians are not the only ones who studiously disregard the popular will. One glaring statistic on the list of options is hurriedly glossed over and dismissed by the **Times**. The option with the highest level of acceptability is 72% of the total (91% of Protestants 39% of Catholics) — integration with the U.K. Let he who is without sin

H-BLOCKS

Sir — Since the election, commentators have been talking and writing of the surprising successes of the H-Block candidates. However, if one examines in detail the election results, one can easily see that, far from being a success, the election was for them a failure.

The last comparable occasion when abstentionist Sinn Fein candidates ran for election was in 1957, again in the wake of an emotional IRA Border campaign, and at that time they won four seats. This time they won only two seats — hardly qualifies as a success. If one looks at the number of votes obtained by candidates who ran on a "support the prisoners" platform, the evidence is there to prove how disastrous this election was for them. Except in the northern counties of the Republic where there is still a sizeable sectarian vote, in no other part of the country did they poll well. This despite an ambivalence towards them by certain party leaders, despite favourable support from a sympathetic section of the media, and despite the use of blatant sectarian emotionalism among the young and immature voters.

To take some examples. In Clare, supposed to be a stronghold of Republicanism, the official H-Block candidate lost his deposit, and Bill Loughnane, who publicly supports the prisoners, scraped in on the last count. In nearby Limerick East, the candidate, Joe Harrington, who used his support of the

prisoners as his main election platform, received less than 1,000 votes, while in the same constituency Independent Socialist Jim Kemmy, who constantly said that the hunger strike is a publicity campaign by the Provos, was elected quite easily.

All over the country one could pick out the well-known names who failed to get elected partly because of their support for the IRA prisoners — Kevin Boland, Paddy Kelly, Matt Merrigan, Paddy Healy, Sile de Valera and Declan Bree.

If Northern Ireland was an issue in the election as claimed by sections of the media, then the huge swing to Fine Gael, the "law-and-order" party, especially in Dublin, which recently got a taste of Provo destabilisation tactics, is in reality a vote against the IRA.

What the election proves is that despite hand-picking their strongest constituencies and using the most sectarian and emotive propaganda the Provisional IRA, with less than 3% of the poll, has been given a severe rebuff by the majority of the Irish people.

Yours, etc.

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